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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 24 March 2010, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Muita ..... (Kenya)

Contents

Adoption of the agenda

Adoption of the conclusions of the fourth biannual review of the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi

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In the absence of Mr. Maurer (Switzerland), Mr. Muburi Muita (Kenya) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

1. **The Chairperson** said he took it that the Commission wished to hold an open meeting, in accordance with established practice and its rules of procedure.

2. *It was so decided.*

Adoption of the agenda (PBC/4/BDI/2)

3. *The agenda was adopted.*

Adoption of the conclusions of the fourth biannual review of the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi (PBC/4/BDI/L.1)

4. **Mr. Nsanze** (Burundi), Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, introducing the fourth progress report, said that developments in the area of good governance included the enactment and promulgation of the Electoral Code, which would ensure an environment conducive to the holding of free and transparent elections; the establishment of independent provincial and communal electoral commissions which would publish electoral rolls and ensure the smooth conduct of elections at their respective levels; the provision of electoral assistance under an agreement between the Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), including support to the Ministry of the Interior, with respect to the issuance, free of charge, of national identity cards to 1,087,600 people; and the expansion of voter registration to include Burundians abroad, taking the total enrolment to over 3.5 million, more than half of whom were women.

5. The Permanent Forum for Dialogue among Political Parties had been established through a joint ordinance which provided, inter alia, that a minimum of 30 per cent political party representatives in the Forum must be women. With respect to civil and political rights, the Ministry of the Interior had taken steps to promote better cooperation among political parties and local authorities, instructing the latter to prevent the young militants of some political parties from hijacking sports for political purposes.

6. International partners had contributed to the effort to ensure the holding of free and transparent elections and had been informed not only of the preparatory activities but also of the delays in the disbursement of funds pledged. Indeed, while his Government had been anticipating funding to cover the bulk of the election costs, it had received a little over 40 per cent of the amount required; with the first election scheduled for 21 May 2010 but two months away, it was facing an alarming shortfall of nearly US$ 21 million in its election budget.

7. He appealed to the United Nations, in particular the Peacebuilding Commission, and the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB), to step up their appeals for the rapid mobilization and timely disbursement of the funds needed for the elections and urged those partners that had made commitments to honour them. The 2010 elections were to be the crowning achievement of peacebuilding in Burundi.

8. While his Government welcomed the additional support provided by its partners to the police and the media, it would like those partners to ensure that the non-governmental organizations they used to execute their programmes were genuine and legitimate.

9. With the establishment of the Ombudsman institution, the institutional framework for the fight against corruption, including the anti-corruption court, the audit court, the Burundi Revenue Authority and the value-added tax, had been put in place. Preparatory work for the development of a national good governance strategy had begun and the privatization of State enterprises was ongoing. Workshops had been organized throughout the country with the support of Burundi's international partners to raise awareness of the need to combat corruption. An unfortunate legacy of 13 years of civil war was an impoverished population that was tempted to embezzle public funds. Partner support for the anti-corruption machineries was all the more urgent since the Government had been forced, owing to budget constraints, to postpone the implementation of the recommendations of the ad hoc commission on the harmonization of salaries in the public sector.

10. Under the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government and the Forces nationales de libération (FNL), integration of civilian FNL leaders into the Government had continued, with the appointment of three FNL leaders to the National Commission on Land and Other Assets and FNL had

been asked to propose a candidate for the post of adviser to the Governor of Bururi province.

11. The professionalization of the defence and security forces had continued; medium-term strategic and action plans had been developed for them which took into account the gender dimension. He urged the country's European partners to continue supporting Burundi's efforts to professionalize its defence and security forces. While tremendous strides had been made in the campaign to disarm the civilian population, it must continue.

12. The situation with respect to the rule of law and justice should improve with the enactment and promulgation of the draft bill on the code of criminal procedure. Pending the adoption of the code, the Ministry of Justice had initiated various measures to combat impunity, including the appointment of focal points to protect children and combat gender-based violence, the organization of round tables to raise magistrates' awareness of the need to combat sexual violence. The Falcon 50 jet case had been referred to the office of the Prosecutor General of the Republic.

13. The draft bill on the national independent human rights commission was currently under discussion in Parliament; and provision had been made under the 2010 budget for its operating costs. The goal of increasing women's representation in institutions was achieved through the provision in the Electoral Code that at least 30 per cent of members of communal councils should be women. Furthermore, 2009 appointments in the Ministry of Justice had brought the proportion of women in the judiciary to 34 per cent. While his Government generally welcomed the contribution of international partners to justice sector reform, it deplored the attitude of those partners whose strategies sought to maintain the type of ethnic imbalance rejected in the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi. Country-wide consultations with a view to the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms had been concluded, while consultations with the diaspora were ongoing.

14. Under the act on the National Commission on Land and Other Assets, provincial commissions could settle cases amicably and enforce the decisions of the National Commission. A long-term strategy for the socio-economic reintegration of people affected by the conflict had been adopted by the Council of Ministers on 18 February 2010. The strategy would draw, inter alia, on the labour-intensive community infrastructure rehabilitation projects financed by UNDP and on the results of the study on grass-roots economic opportunities conducted by the Government and its partners in September 2009. While the Government was satisfied with the assistance provided by its current partners, it expected the Peacebuilding Commission to make vigorous appeals for the mobilization of resources to address the long-term socio-economic integration of those affected by the conflict. In that regard, it had set up a sectoral group on community recovery, repatriation and reintegration.

15. Aware of the importance of the support of its regional and international partners, the Government of Burundi had participated in meetings of the regional and subregional organizations of which it was a member. It had brought its customs system into line with the rest of the East African Community, was working with Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on amending the statutes of the Economic Community of the Great Lake Countries to bring them into line with the current situation in the subregion. A similar approach would be taken with regard to the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Economic Community of Central African States and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. He hoped that the country's partners would provide practical support for its regional integration efforts.

16. Turning to international assistance, he noted that the Strategic Forum of the Partners' Coordination Group would follow up on the recommendations of the conference of the Consultative Group for Burundi, held in Paris on 26 and 27 October 2009. The harmonization of the two Strategic Frameworks would continue. A similar approach would be used in crafting the new phase of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and implementing the recommendations of the Consultative Group. The functioning of the sectoral groups would be enhanced so that they could be used as tools for the development of medium-term expenditure frameworks. To ensure that aid coordination fully benefited from the Paris Principles and the Accra Agenda for Action, his Government's planning, including budgeting, would be transparent. For their part, international partners should provide their forecasts on budget support and ODA and respect their schedule of disbursement in order to enable the Government to achieve its objectives.

17. His Government had already established the mechanisms called for in the recommendations to be adopted. However, making those mechanisms fully operational would require better and more human resources, facilities and financial resources that Burundi alone could not obtain. He therefore appealed to the Peacebuilding Commission to redouble its efforts to mobilize the resources needed for the organization of the 2010 elections and to ensure sustainability of the results under the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding.

18. **Ms. Keita** (Acting Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi and Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB)) said that the consolidation of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper marked an important step towards the integration of peacebuilding with the long-term development agenda. While she welcomed the active and constructive participation of the Government and its international partners in the Partners' Coordination Group, she wished to single out the sectoral groups for their work in drafting the report's thematic chapters. The preparation of the report had once again given national and international partners the opportunity to review the progress made and priorities for peacebuilding in Burundi. The subsequent disagreements that emerged should be addressed through frank and constructive dialogue so that together the partners could find solutions to the country's challenges and move towards lasting peace.

19. The reporting period saw the completion of the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement, thanks to the support of the South African Facilitation, the Partnership for Peace in Burundi and the Political Directorate. The former rebel movement, Palipehutu-FNL, had become a political party and its members had been disarmed and integrated into the Burundian army and police. Substantial progress had been made to date in the preparations for the 2010 elections, especially with respect to the registration of the electorate and the establishment of the data processing centre, thanks to the commitment of the National Independent Electoral Commission, which earned the trust of all stakeholders because of its independence and neutrality. However, given what was at stake, the funds pledged by the international community must be delivered to the Electoral Commission for it to be able to properly organize all the key priority aspects of the elections, including security arrangements and settlement of electoral disputes. Indeed, free, transparent and peaceful elections were vital to the strengthening of democracy and the realization of sustainable development.

20. After the elections, the long-term socio-economic development of the country would require the reintegration of returnees, displaced peoples, demobilized soldiers and associated adults, and other vulnerable groups, including demobilized child soldiers, to remove a potentially destabilizing factor that could undermine the achievements of peacebuilding. The Government had made considerable efforts to address the issue through its national socio-economic reintegration strategy, and must maximize technical and financial resources to ensure the success of that strategy.

21. Socio-economic reintegration would also depend on the establishment of an enabling security environment. If trust was to be rebuilt among Burundians, more vigorous efforts must be made to enforce the new laws on weapons possession, disarm the civilian population and monitor weapons issued to members of the defence and security forces.

22. Social stability and lasting peace also depended on an enabling environment for justice and social harmony. Human rights, including political and civil liberties and the independence of the judiciary, must be guaranteed. The national independent human rights commission must be established quickly and in accordance with the Paris Principles.

23. The United Nations system in Burundi was committed to providing assistance to the country before, during and after the elections through the long-term vision of its Integrated Peacebuilding Support Strategy.

Tribute to the memory of Susan Hogwood, former member of the Joint Steering Committee for Burundi of the Peacebuilding Commission

24. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the Commission observed a minute of silence.*

25. **The Chairperson** said that the recent field visit of the Peacebuilding Commission to Burundi had been extremely productive. The delegation had met with the high-ranking Government officials, including cabinet ministers, as well as representatives of the National

Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), political parties, FNL, civil society, the international community and the private sector. It had also visited Bubanza province, where it had met with the Governor and representatives of the local electoral commissions and civil society.

26. The delegation had been impressed by the engagement of all parties with the peace process. CENI continued to show strong leadership in the election preparation process, and the provincial and communal election commissions were in place and operating. Among the major achievements was a campaign to issue identification documents to voters. Throughout the visit, there was agreement on the need for election monitoring; the European Union, the African Union and the East African Community were all making preparations to deploy observers. He stressed the importance of coordinating those monitoring efforts.

27. **Mr. Grauls** (Belgium), expressing support for the draft conclusions, said that, while his Government welcomed the successful voter registration exercise and the adoption by the political parties of a code of conduct, it was concerned that continuing tension and violence could interfere with free and open political dialogue. His country had decided to make another contribution of 2 million euros, to the UNDP-managed election fund and hoped that other countries would follow suit. Priorities needed to be established with a view to eliminating non-essential expenditures, and disagreements between the international partners and the Burundian authorities with respect to training for judges and judicial officers needed to be resolved. His country had implemented bilateral programmes to assist in the reintegration of people affected by the conflict and was planning several seminars and events to support the private sector.

28. **Ms. Cheng-Hopkins** (Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support) said that the experience in Burundi had highlighted the complementarity between the Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. While the Fund was not in the habit of underwriting elections, it was willing to make an exception in the case of Burundi, where the link between a successful election and peacebuilding was so clear. She was pleased to see women's empowerment figuring so prominently in the Strategic Framework. Burundi lent itself well to investment in women's empowerment projects because of the dynamic nature of women's participation in Burundian society.

29. **Mr. Chileya** (Assistant Executive Secretary, International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)), speaking by video link from Bujumbura on behalf of the Executive Secretary of ICGLR, commended the Commission and the Government of Burundi for their efforts to create a climate conducive to free and fair elections and welcomed the draft recommendations. More work was needed to reform the security sector, mobilize technical and financial resources for the elections, and promote trust among Burundian political leaders. It was important for the political parties, media and youth groups to respect the code of conduct. He reiterated the commitment of ICGLR to continuing to work with the Commission and the international community to ensure peaceful and successful elections.

30. **Mr. Samake** (African Union Burundi Office), speaking by video link from Bujumbura, said that the election would be an important stage in the peace process, and prospects were promising for a peaceful and successful outcome that could serve as an example for the rest of Africa. Security remained a concern. The African Union had already held consultations with the Permanent Forum for Dialogue among Political Parties and with the Electoral Commission about how it could best assist in the electoral process. It would continue to work with BINUB to ensure security in the pre-election period.

31. **Mr. Dartenucq** (European Union), speaking by video link from Bujumbura, expressed support for the draft conclusions and satisfaction with the electoral process. However, there were concerns about violence being perpetrated by groups purporting to be youth sport associations; that was having an adverse effect on freedom of political dialogue. Fortunately, the political party congresses had been held without any problems. He was concerned over the fact that although the European Commission had contributed almost 5 million euros to the election fund, an itemized budget had not yet been completed.

32. In response to a request from the President of the Republic of Burundi, the European Union had decided to send an observer mission to cover all 17 provinces of the country. He stressed the importance of the participation of civil society in the political process. The European Union advocated a development strategy

that addressed the needs of the 65 per cent of Burundi's population living below the poverty line while also creating a business-friendly environment. Improved governance and elimination of corruption were crucial to the achievement of those goals. He expressed support for the recommendations of the Commission regarding transitional justice and urged the authorities to complete the investigations into the murder of Ernest Manirumva, Vice-President of the Observatory for the Struggle against Corruption and Economic Embezzlement.

33. **Mr. Kamenyero** (Civil Society), speaking by video link from Bujumbura, said that the National Independent Electoral Commission had remained neutral and had shown itself to be up to its task. The Minister of the Interior had eased the tension among young members of political parties and, on the whole, the Agreement between the Government and FNL had been complied with. The mobile courts programme had adjudicated cases in the countryside and helped to improve the human rights situation. National consultations on the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms had proceeded well. The new Electoral Code had gone some way towards correcting imbalances in women's representation in local decision-making bodies, by requiring that at least 30 per cent of seats on such bodies should be reserved for them. The amended act on the organization and functioning of the National Commission on Land and Other Assets would promote the settlement of land disputes.

34. However, the Electoral Code was not clear on how to deal with elections-related disturbances. To guarantee a secure environment for the elections, political parties and other stakeholders must engage in genuine democratic debate because of widespread concern over the manipulation of security forces by political parties and doubts as to whether it was police chiefs or electoral commissions that had control over the elections.

35. The anti-corruption mechanisms were apparently not effective. Jurisdictional privileges protected those in positions of power from being prosecuted for illicit enrichment, while some officials failed to file disclosures of personal assets as required by law. Since the discussion of security matters, including non-military ones, were considered taboo, the consultations on the white paper on security could prove to be very difficult. Tension could flare up anew with respect to civilian control over security governance and the Government must encourage the freedom of opinion and of the press instead of trying to suppress them. The establishment of the National Independent Human Rights Commission, in accordance with the Paris Principles, would be a step in the right direction.

36. The failure to solve the murders of political leaders and other peaceful citizens was regrettable, as was the violation by Government forces of the right of association. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) must be fully implemented to ensure the participation of women in decision-making.

37. In order to reduce the number of land disputes, the Government must organize a national debate on reducing the birth rate. To improve living conditions, all partners must work together to create employment through labour-intensive projects and inform the public about opportunities for regional integration, with improved training schemes in the States concerned.

38. **Ms. Ndayishimiye** (Private Sector), speaking by video link from Bujumbura on behalf of the Federal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that no country could envisage lasting peace without economic activity and employment opportunities, particularly for the youth. The private sector could create such jobs in the appropriate environment. Economic operators must play a leading role in the efforts to reconstruct and develop Burundi. The Federal Chamber of Commerce and Industry had been created to better position private-sector associations in a fast moving world and to support them in their efforts to jump-start business activity even as they improved their profitability and competitiveness in the region, including in the East African Community.

39. The Federal Chamber of Commerce and Industry welcomed the fourth biannual report on the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi and was committed to supporting all the goals defined in the Strategic Framework. She reiterated the importance to peace in the country of free, fair and transparent elections, welcomed the political and economic support of multilateral and bilateral partners, encouraged them to maintain their commitment and called upon donors to contribute significantly to the Government's budget and to support the private sector so that it could play a key role in economy recovery and job creation.

40. She called for the prompt implementation of the national strategy for governance and poverty reduction and for the development of a national strategy for economic integration within the East African Community. Dialogue and partnership must be strengthened among the Government and its international partners to ensure a free flow of information on aid pledges and flows and improve aid coordination. Government planning must include transparent budgets and social benefits must be maintained.

41. **Mr. Kafeero** (Uganda) welcomed the conclusions of the fourth biannual review and commended the Government and people of Burundi on the remarkable progress that the country had made, including the preparations for the elections, which were evidence of a sense of unity and purpose within the country. The conclusions of the review had been reached by the Government in conjunction with civil society and its international partners and revealed a strong sense of ownership, which was necessary for the success and sustainability of the country's development efforts.

42. In addition to the elections, attention must be paid to the critical investments necessary to address the socio-economic challenges faced by the country. The international community must honour the pledges it had made to support the elections and assist with resources needed for investments in the country's long-term peace and stability. Uganda, for its part, would continue to support any and every effort to consolidate peace and stability in the country.

43. **Mr. Gaedtke** (Germany) welcomed the deep commitment of all the country's stakeholders to building peace, that was reflected in the readiness of high-ranking officials to receive the delegation during the recent field visit. Close cooperation between the authorities of Burundi and the United Nations was a precondition for the successful implementation of the Strategic Framework and for sustainable peace and stability.

44. While he welcomed the progress made in the preparation for the elections, he wished to appeal to the Government of Burundi to take the necessary measures to ensure that the elections were peaceful, free and fair and that adequate security was provided. Germany had provided 160,000 euros of financial support to the UNDP Basket Fund for the first phase of the elections and a grant of 100,000 euros for a project to strengthen democratic oversight of the 2010 elections to be implemented by the NGO RCN Justice & Democratie. The successful conclusion of the programme for the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of former combatants was not only part of the 2006 Ceasefire Agreement but also essential to lasting and sustainable security and stability in the country. Germany stood ready to provide further support to the Government of Burundi in security sector reform, as exemplified in its work with the police force.

45. **Mr. Harvey** (United Kingdom) said that the new review process, under harmonized sectoral groups which served both the Peacebuilding and Poverty Reduction Strategic Frameworks, was an encouraging step towards simplifying and harmonizing coordination mechanisms which would reduce transaction costs for the Government and improve dialogue with the international community.

46. He welcomed the conclusions on the justice sector, especially with regard to training and capacity-building for judges and judicial officers, and congratulated the Government, especially CENI, on the preparations for the elections, including the registration of over 3.5 million people. He noted the success of efforts to encourage professional reporting of issues by the media. Continued attention was essential to resolve electoral disputes.

47. East African Community integration would provide significant opportunities for economic growth in the future, but only if there was immediate investment. A core requirement in that regard was the establishment of a transparent and effective revenue authority; although progress to date had been slow, his delegation welcomed the fact that it was close to opening for business. There would need to be continued political focus to ensure that it delivered a strong tax base for the country.

48. Greater efforts must be made to tackle corruption and fight against impunity. His delegation hoped to see progress in investigations into the murder of Mr. Manirumva and the Gatumba massacre.

49. The conclusions and recommendations should have identified specific areas where the Peacebuilding Commission could provide support together with benchmarks. His delegation remained committed to supporting Burundi, especially in the areas of basic Government services such as health, education and justice. It was providing substantial support for East

African Community integration because of the good potential for economic growth in the coming years.

50. **Mr. Scrubere** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation endorsed Burundi's appeal to its donor partners and the international community for support to the country in its current moment of need.

51. His delegation appreciated the progress made in the preparations for the elections, especially the establishment of the legal and operational framework of CENI and the subsequent establishment of provincial and communal election commissions. It also welcomed the Government's efforts towards the completion of the demobilization process for former FNL combatants and dissidents, and the reinsertion of its associated adults and children.

52. He urged multilateral and bilateral partners to provide more financial and political support to the Government of Burundi and called on the United Nations to continue to support Burundi's peacebuilding and recovery efforts through BINUB.

53. **Mr. Meurs** (United States of America) urged the Government of Burundi to implement the recommendations of the review with a view to ensuring not only a legitimate and credible electoral process, but also a secure and serene environment conducive to the holding of free, fair and peaceful elections and to a smooth transfer of power. Political party leaders, civil servants and Government officials, security sector officers and members of civil society should respect the Electoral Code. Abuse of authority and resort to violence should not be tolerated.

54. His Government was supporting the electoral process with training and equipment for the National Independent Electoral Commission and would be observing the entire electoral process, as requested by President Nkurunziza.

55. The United States endorsed the key role of the United Nations team in supporting preparations for the elections and facilitating a peaceful process, welcomed the appointment of Mr. Charles Petrie as the new Executive Representative for Burundi and Head of BINUB and urged the Government of Burundi to give him all due support in the fulfilment of the Office's mandate.

56. Job creation would be critical to addressing the long-term causes of recurring instability in Burundi. While the private sector could play a leading role in driving economic growth and recovery, it faced serious constraints, including limited access to affordable capital, competition with East African Community members for market share and insufficient knowledge of the markets and of Burundi's comparative advantage. Noting that a well-articulated vision and strategy needed to be developed to enable the private sector to proceed with confidence in areas where it knew it would be supported, he urged the Government to create an investment environment that would attract foreign investors, reduce non-tariff barriers to trade and implement a system that would discourage corruption.

57. **Ms. Segerstrom** (Sweden) said that her country placed particular importance on the gender component and the mobilization of women as voters, witnesses and observers. Expressing concern over the fact that putting emphasis on shrinking the funding gap might result in gender aspects of the programme being curtailed, she said that her country was considering making an additional pledge of $250,000 to be specifically earmarked for the gender component.

58. **Mr. de Klerk** (Netherlands), noting that he had taken part in the Commission's recent field visit to Burundi, said that Burundi had all the potential to emerge as a stable and prosperous country, but needed international support at the current stage of its development. The Government of Burundi needed to be transparent in its decision-making. The drafting of the new poverty reduction strategy paper offered an opportunity to ensure that peacebuilding would go hand-in-hand with long-term development. The immediate goal was to make progress in all the areas highlighted in the Strategic Framework, in particular security sector reform, and to ensure adequate funding and the maintenance of an atmosphere conducive to freedom of speech.

59. **Mr. Mugodo** (Kenya) called on all partners to ensure that the gap in the election fund would be filled. It was important for international interventions to address both peacebuilding and development needs. Priorities should be set locally in order to ensure national ownership of the process. Political and judicial institutions needed to be strengthened to facilitate Burundi's participation in regional integration with neighbouring States.

60. **Mr. Aeschlimann** (Switzerland) said that, while the elections would not be the solution to all of

Burundi's problems, they would contribute to facilitating peace and reconciliation. Funding was needed for basic infrastructure over and above security requirements. Burundi had done its part to ensure that laws were being complied with, institutions respected and obstacles overcome. As chair of the Burundi configuration, his country encouraged donors to make additional contributions.

61. **Ms. Rulomeni** (South Africa) said that the peace process was a major success for African cooperation, and could not have happened without the commitment of the Burundian people. It was important for all parties to maintain sustained engagement with the process and to support the Strategic Framework and the poverty reduction strategy. She supported the draft conclusions, which demonstrated the true spirit of ownership.

62. **Mr. Komarek** (Czech Republic) said that the fourth biannual report had accurately reflected both the successes achieved and the remaining challenges. He hoped that the gaps in election funding would be covered. Ultimately, the success of the elections would depend on political dialogue among the stakeholders. International observers, such as those being dispatched by the European Union, could help to ensure a fair and peaceful outcome. However, elections were only one step in a process that needed to include improved governance, security sector reform, elimination of corruption and impunity, socio-economic reintegration, and the creation of a climate conducive to development and investment. As the first country on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda, Burundi's experience had demonstrated that the Commission could be a constructive partner for peace and development. He expressed support for the draft conclusions.

63. **Mr. Travers** (Canada) said that his country was sending a training expert to work with UNDP and the National Independent Electoral Commission in preparation for the elections.

64. **Mr. Tagle** (Chile) welcomed the progress to date in the preparations for the elections and in the country's economic recovery efforts. With five different elections taking place in a four-month period, adequate security was essential. Ensuring free access for the media would minimize post-election problems.

65. **Ms. Sánchez Salazar** (Mexico) said that she was particularly pleased with the efforts to increase female representation in political institutions. She welcomed the efforts being made by the Peacebuilding Support Office to provide additional funds for the elections.

66. **Mr. António** (Observer for the African Union) expressed support for the draft conclusions. He stressed the importance of the elections and appealed to the international community to make available the funding required for their success. While an important step, the elections should not distract attention from other peacebuilding issues, such as women's rights, protection of vulnerable individuals and the reintegration of refugees, displaced persons and former fighters.

67. **The Chairperson** said he took it that the members of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission wished to adopt the conclusions of the fourth biannual review of the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi as contained in document PBC/4/BDI/L.1.

68. *It was so decided.*

69. **The Chairperson** said that the importance of adequate funding for the election process in Burundi could not be overemphasized. While elections were a crucial milestone, there were many other challenges, including the socio-economic reintegration of people affected by war, transitional justice, and the creation of an environment conducive to economic development and foreign investment. Meeting those challenges would require long-term engagement by the Commission in partnership with the African Union, the African Development Bank and the international financial institutions.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.